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THE INDIA MISSION;

A PAPER BY

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OF BOSTON.

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AND OTHER

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THE INDIA MISSION.

IN the year 1853-4, the Rev. Chas. T. Brooks went on a voyage to India. He landed at Madras and was welcomed with tears of joy, by Mr. William Roberts and his little church. At length their "prayers had been answered." So thought these simple people, and a missionary had come to them from the fountain head of christian love and learning. Mr. Roberts was the son of a devoted christian preacher, a native, who had been won to the truths of christianity as taught by the Unitarian church. The father had died at his post, and the son, his filial piety overcoming his sense of unfitness, had continued his father's work, hoping some day to receive help from those who were of the same religious family across the sea.

The Cape of Good Hope seemed at last to have fulfilled the promise of its name, and sent an answer to his prayers, when this beaming Saxon face appeared to Wm. Roberts at Madras. But Mr. Brooks had not come as a missionary; not even, by intention, as the forerunner of one. He had come on a voyage for the renewal of his health. He left Madras and sailed on to Calcutta. There again, his coming quickened desire in the hearts of that faithful company of believers in one God, and in Jesus Christ, his Son. Since the death of Rammohun Roy and the departure of Rev. Mr. Adam, they had been left without a leader. The appeal of these desolate believers in that distant land so moved the sympathy of Mr. Brooks, that he earnestly pressed their claims upon the American Unitarian Association, as soon as he returned to this country. The plan of sending a missionary to India was not a new one. In 1821, Henry Ware had been in correspondence with Rammohun Roy and his English convert to Unitarianism, Mr. Adam, about this mission, and Norton and Tuckerman and Gannett had given the measure their warm approval. An appeal from responsible residents of Calcutta, both native and English, endorsed by the traditional favor of the fathers of our church, and urged by the persuasive eloquence of the poet preacher, whose physical

weakness has more than once been the strengthening of his brethren, could not be denied. Before the close of the year 1855, a missionary was sent to India. This was Mr. C. H. A. Dall, then a young man of rare promise, adding to the honors and graces of the university, an enthusiasm of humanity, and a consecration to the christian ministry, which seemed to make him peculiarly fitted for the work.

From that day to this, now seventeen years, Mr. Dall has kept his post. Although compelled by the demands of health and the interests of the mission to return to this country twice in this time, his work in India has never been suspended. What that work is, and has been, every reader of the quarterly and monthly journals during this period has had abundant opportunity of knowing. And yet, I question if many men really do know about this work. In truth I did not know myself until I was compelled to inquire about it, as one of the committee, responsible for its management. The letters in which this information was conveyed to us have not been couched in clear, cool, business-like phrases, which leave the mind master of the situation. Something of the luxuriance of tropical nature makes the letters from India not a little dark and umbrageous, and facts and figures dart in and out of the woods, oftentimes quite obscured by the rhetoric and emotion of the writer. Nevertheless, the facts and figures are there, in the published or unpublished letters sent to the India Committee. Every fortnight, in peace or war, the punctual letter from our India missionary is sure to come. No agent could have been more faithful in the frequency or fulness of the reports; and if some obscurity has veiled their statement of facts, it is only such obscurity as must ensue, when the warm breath of the tropics strikes against the clear, cool windows of the north, through whose panes we contemplate our Foreign Mission. If you cannot pardon emotion and enthusiasm in a missionary, you cannot have him; for without an emotional and enthusiastic nature, no man would undertake the thankless service.

But, to the facts. What are they? After sixteen years of life and service in India, what have Mr. Dall and his associates accomplished? For five years, 1855—1860, a small church was maintained in Calcutta, and our missionary's ministry was patterned after the ordinary New England parish; two sermons on

Sunday, baptism of converts, visitation of the parish, publication of tracts and, as often as possible, a lending hand to every needy man or cause. Eighty tracts were printed, forty children and nine or ten adults were baptized, five hundred and twenty sermons were preached, two on Sunday for five years, and still, "the heathen, in his blindness, bows down to wood and stone." Lest any unbeliever should think this poverty of result peculiar to Unitarian preaching in India, I will say that Mr. Bowen, the devoted missionary of the American Board of Foreign Missions, resident at Bombay, frankly confessed to Dr. Norman Macleod, that in more than twenty-five years of preaching in that city, he had not, to his knowledge, made one convert.

Clearly something more than preaching, something other than the traditional ministry of the church, was needed for India. Mr. Dall was among the first to discover and adopt the agency of a day school, for secular education, as the best means of reaching and converting the youth of India. He did this in the face of distrust, both at home and abroad. But the wisdom of his course has been acknowledged by the adoption of his method, by all the leading missions of other denominations; so that the inspector of foreign missions declares to-day that "no mission is complete without the school." Ever since 1860, now twelve years, Mr. Dall has put the emphasis of his service upon these schools. Nor did he slavishly copy the schools of New England. On the contrary, he anticipated the probable future of our school system, by adding an industrial element to the usual instruction in letters. He established a school of useful arts. The result is, that two hundred and forty pupils each year come under the instruction of our mission schools. And during these twelve years, such intimacy has grown up between the missionary and his pupils, that he numbers 2,250 boys and men, 260 women and 660 rovers; in all, 3,170 people, among the recipients of his teaching or help, and the objects of his personal interest and care. Who of us can number such a parish? Three times a week, Mr. Dall addresses the scholars on religious themes, enforcing the teaching of the christian gospels. Who of us preaches three times a week? Add to the daily task of teaching and superintendence of the schools, the writing and publication of tracts, and the frequent preparation and delivery of lectures, and remember that these things are done

with the thermometer at a height which is never seen in the hottest months in this country, and you may understand somewhat the labor of a missionary in Calcutta. For one, I find no excuse for easy complaint of my brother Dall, so long as I am glad to shun the mild fervors of a New England summer in the city. Nor do I think a company of ministers in this temperate clime have a right to criticise the list of Hindoo converts, when they have themselves agreed that "no soul was ever converted in the month of August."

The facts I have stated about the India Mission came in their succinct form, by the hands of Miss Chamberlain, a lady assistant of Mr. Dall, who has visited this country during the last summer, and who confirms their accuracy, so far as her observation extends, by her own testimony. Mr. Partridge of St. Louis, who has visited India within the year, also bears strong testimony to the work. And Mr. Aldrich, who spent a year in Calcutta, in our employ, describes the daily teaching, which is now the main part of our mission, in the same way. He thinks, however, that there is a call in Calcutta for Sunday preaching. And it is probable that the last twelve years of education in the mission and government schools have reared an audience of English-speaking natives, who would reward any earnest preacher with their attention, as often as he should address them on living themes. It ought to be stated that the cost of the India Mission including the stations at Calcutta, Salem and Secunderabad, is about \$3,600. Of this sum, nearly one-half comes from Mr. Heyward's bequest for foreign missions. So that only \$2,000, at the utmost, goes to India, out of the annual contributions to the Association. Put this sum by the side of the \$461,054, the income of the American Board of Foreign Missions for 1871, or the \$823,586, the income of the Church of England Society, for the same year, or the \$107,005, the contribution of the little band of the Moravians, and then complain, if you will, of our stipend to India. Unless, however, we are prepared to take the ground that a nation of 200,000,000 people, given over to idolatry, has no claims upon christian rescue, our complaint must be, not at the size, but at the littleness, of the outlay.

I dare not attempt, within the space fairly appropriated to this subject, to portray all the difficulties in the way of Hindoo con-

version, which even such study as a distant inquirer like myself could give has revealed to me.

I will only ask you to imagine that Lord Cornwallis, instead of failing in his endeavor to subjugate this America of ours, had succeeded; that Yorktown, instead of witnessing his surrender, had been red with his triumph; imagine that the last century had been a century of British rule instead of American independence in this land; imagine that the surrender of Washington had been followed by a succession of governors sent over from England who, in order to fill the coffers of a scheming corporation, and increase the government revenues, scrupled at no act of injustice, breaking sacred oaths and treaty obligations, on pretexts which were more often the invention of a greedy ambition than the offence of a rebellious people; conceive these invaders, under cover of relieving your several states of the burden of government, gradually stealing first the functions, then the emoluments, and, finally, the very land and property of these United States; conceive a man with the thieving ability of the Tammany leaders, the audacity of Brigham Young, the brutality of Nana Sahib, the ambition of a Bismarck; imagine Warren Hastings and Clive let loose upon this conquered land and followed in their career of despotism and robbery by other governors, whose virtues never stood in the way of new aggrandizements; behold this country, conquered, spoiled, and reduced to terrified subjection, instead of being the compeer of England, claiming and receiving damages for secondary wrongs; behold all this,—and then imagine a company of missionaries of the Church of England landing on these shores and attempting to convert us to the Established Religion! Would you join?

I have drawn no imaginary picture, except in its location. India, not America, is the land we saw. Cornwallis has had a recompense for his American defeat in the success of his Indian campaign; and to-day, a people, only induced by compulsion to accept English commodities, is urged to adopt, of its own free will, the English religion. No wonder christian missions make slow progress in a country, under subjection to a christian people, whose tardy and partial justice has not yet obliterated the memory of terrible wrongs, or removed the disabilities of Hindoo birth and nationality!

Other things being equal, American missions ought to be more acceptable to the inhabitants of India than those of England. If any English-speaking nation can persuade them to accept christianity, we are that nation.

But above and beyond the antagonism between the conquering and conquered nation, there exists the opposition of irreconcilable customs and principles. Idolatry cannot be shaved down into conformity with the spiritual and truthful worship of Him who is a Spirit.

Neither the prejudices nor the privileges of caste can ever be reconciled with the requirements of human brotherhood. The early espousal of women and their systematized ignorance can never consist with the purity and dignity of a christian home, and permanent widowhood is a burden upon woman so unjust, that christian manhood could never consent to it. These principles and customs are ingrained in the constitution of Hindoo society. They are planted there by centuries of religious sanction and impositions. It is this which gives them their permanent hold upon the people. It is this which renders any reform in India impossible which leaves its religion unchanged.

Political economists and clever magazinists tell us that the best missionaries are the plough, the railroad, the printing press and the canal. The railway car compelling Brahmin and Sudra, soldier, priest and farmer to travel side by side, — this is the great destroyer of India's caste-bound civilization. Not so. The Brahmin at the end of this journey is a Brahmin still, and no length of travel will land a Sudra any higher up in the social scale than when he started.

A writer upon this subject says that among the Sepoys, a Brahmin in the ranks would obey the orders of a low caste officer, but out of the ranks, the private would say to his military superior — "Stand off! I am holier than thou."

No; nothing will cure the evils that flow from a false religion, but the good that comes from a true religion.

And whatever may be said of the comparative morality of christian and heathen people, and certainly the displays of honesty by nominal christians in India are not calculated to make the Hindoo or Mohammedan blush at the comparison, there is yet this grand distinction of the christian religion. The evil practices of its

professors can never find shelter under its sanction. If christians are low-lived, inhuman or dishonest, it is always against the protest of their religion. But the worst evils of Hindoo society are under the sanction, yea, they are the traditional requirement, of the Hindoo religion. Does not this show that the only hope for India is in the change of its religious belief and trust? Some trust in iron chariots and some in horses of steam, but for me, my single hope for India is in the knowledge of the one true and only God.

The problem simply stated is this: here are two hundred millions of human beings, of the same race as yourselves, their fathers going eastward from the old home of the Aryan race, ours coming west. They are idolaters and their religion upholds them in idolatry. If we are idolaters it is not the fault of our religion. We have something, therefore, to give them; a religion, which will do for them what it does for us,—rebuke sins and show the way to holiness. Shall we give it to them? We can only refuse at the price of losing it ourselves; christianity will not keep, save in its dispersion.

Two ways of commending it to India are open to us, one the preached word; and for this I would send to India every year, one of the best scholars, the most persuasive preachers, the leading minds of the liberal church. A visit by such a man and a ministry of three months in Calcutta would make an impression upon the religious belief of both native and European residents there. It would not occasion any longer absence from the home field, whether parish or college, than most ministers take every few years for a trip to Europe. It would put our permanent missionary in India on a stronger footing and give his ministry the backing of high examples of christian learning and character. It would sharpen the powers and renew the intellectual life of men among us whose learning needs the provocation of dense darkness. If, in return, it brought such a man as Chunder Sen to this country, it would be an exchange that would involve no robbery from us. The other way of commending our gospel to India is by the acted word; and for this I would strengthen and increase the present facilities for practical christianity there. Besides the schools, there should be a pleasant, central reading room and library, with all the apparatus of our mission for christian work applicable to that locality. I have left myself no time to speak of that native

theistic church, called the Brahmo Somaj which, without compromising his christian name and profession, our brother Dall has joined within the past year. It is not easy to ascertain the number of this society; one says four thousand and another forty thousand. Mr. Dall says "you might as well attempt to count the number of trees in a forest, first touched by the rising sun."

The progressive wing of this body led by Chunder Sen is nearly, if not quite, identical in its platform with this National Conference. Its motto, or cry, as it is called (they have no formal creed), is "God our Father, Man our Brother, Christ our Guide."

The social significance of Mr. Dall's joining this native society is far more important than its doctrinal bearing. Who that has read the wonderful preaching of Sen, with its profound apprehension and devout acceptance of spiritual christianity, could avoid clasping the hand of fellowship with him and his fellow believers? But it is not this agreement of view, so much as the acceptance by a white man of place and membership in a native association, which makes Mr. Dall's action so noteworthy in India. The practical value of this bold step lies in its appeal from the caste of color to the brotherhood of christian equality.

Is it generally known to what lengths this prejudice of race and color governs society in India? That the presence of a native gentleman of culture and refinement is not tolerated in good society in Calcutta? Looked at from this point of view, our missionary's action in joining a Hindoo fraternity was not unlike the devotion of the Moravian missionaries to the West Indies, who became slaves that they might teach those bound in slavery and convert them to christianity. Not that Mr. Dall would not find peers in intellect and character among his new associates, but the victory over social prejudice in joining this fraternity is of the character pointed out. It is the very demonstration of christian charity, for want of which, confessed christianity makes so slow progress in India.

I say *confessed christianity* makes slow progress. But the influence of English education and missionary devotion cannot be tested by the length of the church roll any more than the power of the church in America can be measured by the number of professed church members. English education effectually cures its pupils of idolatrous belief, however short it comes of changing idolatrous practice. The graduates of the twenty thousand schools

maintained wholly or in part by government patronage in India are candidates for a better religion than popular Brahminism. The forty thousand pupils in India who are yearly learning the English language, and through that door entering into the thought of English history and literature, are sure perverts from the faith of their fathers; what shall they be? There is only one alternative; christians or atheists. The rebound from spiritual despotism is always towards utter unbelief. Thousands in India, finding their attenuated faith in the superstition of their childhood cut in two by the sharp knife of a government culture, which makes no provision for religious education, are to-day sunk in the gloom and sorrow of atheism, or lifted into a perilous frivolity, having no knowledge or fear of God before their eyes. If you have a religion which can supply this lost faith in spiritual realities, you have a call to India. If not, then stay away.

I cannot believe, however, that the indifference, yes, I will say the unfriendliness, with which our mission to India has sometimes been regarded is due to the absence of vital christianity among us, so much as to the ignorance of the subject into which we have suffered ourselves to fall. Would the women of our churches rest idly in their pews and sewing circles, if they knew that one hundred millions of their sisters in India were kept in the lowest ignorance, on the shameful pretext that knowledge would become in woman's hands an implement of lust? What do those earnest women, who are striving here in Boston to uplift the standard of female education, say to this darkened land where the jewel of truth is worn only by the courtesan and regarded as the evidence of her degradation?

Already through the Zenana schools, under the patronage of other christian bodies, thirty-nine thousand, six hundred and forty-seven women and girls are receiving an education. Miss Chamberlain is laboring in our employ in the same direction. Give her your organized help, women of the Unitarian church! Be yourselves, as the women of other denominations are, a missionary power, and press on the work of uplifting woman's culture and woman's influence in the far East!

The theme is broad and I must leave it scarcely visited, as our pioneer in the India mission did, when he showed his face to the longing company at Madras and sailed away.

But surely you will send another after me. You will not hear

this cry of a shipwrecked land, beyond the sea, and send no life-boat to the rescue. You will feel in the degradation of India something degrading to yourselves, as christians, so long as you do nothing to change it. You will maintain, enlarge, develop and finally perfect the India Mission.

